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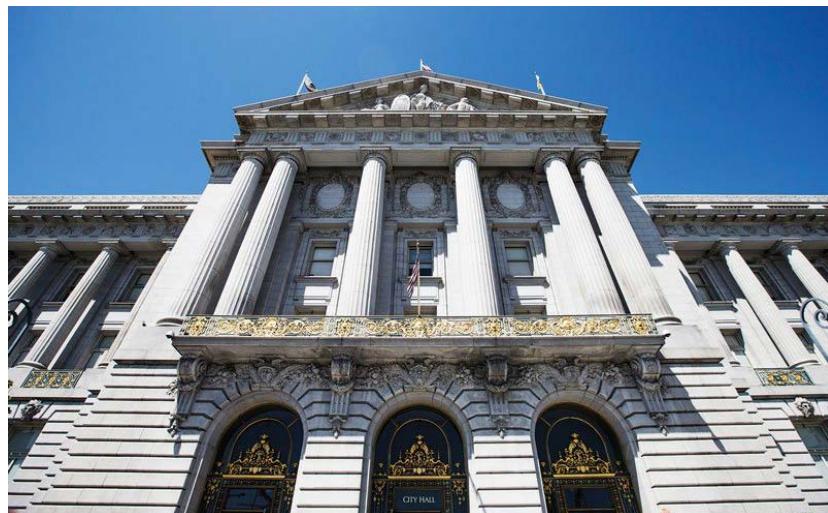
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# Paper bag with incomplete internal affairs cases discovered in sheriff's office



San Francisco City Hall. (Jessica Christian/S.F. Examiner)

By Jonah Owen Lamb on June 10, 2016 1:00 am

Six months into her first term as San Francisco's sheriff, Vicki Hennessy is rolling back several of the former sheriff's initiatives and cleaning up part of the unfinished business he left behind, including a paper bag filled with incomplete disciplinary cases.

There have been a number of policies and initiatives that were started under former Sheriff Ross Mirkarimi's administration that Hennessy has had to deal with, said Sheriff's Department Chief of Staff Eileen Hirst.

But the three incomplete Internal Affairs cases discovered last week in a paper bag were not part of the plan.

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"Our plan is to not store cases in paper bags," said Hirst of the new administration's approach to such cases.

Last week, as undersheriff Carl Koehler was cleaning his City Hall office, a paper grocery bag with handles was discovered inside a filing cabinet, stuffed under some folders.

"They just got stuffed behind a drawer," Hirst said.

Inside, three cases were discovered, all of which were forwarded from Internal Affairs in November to then-undersheriff Frederico Rocha, who was tasked with deciding what to do with the cases, Hirst said.

Two of those cases are set to expire in June or July due to their statute of limitations, said Hirst, who could not provide further details about the cases because of personnel confidentiality rules.

But the department still plans to make rulings on the cases before the statute of limitations runs out.

"I'm glad we found them because the three cases we found, the time limit has not expired," said Hennessy, who does not plan to investigate how the cases ended up in a paper bag. "I can't say who did it."

Rocha, who served for years as a U.S. Marshal, said he did not handle such serious cases so carelessly.

"I would not have put them in a paper bag in a filing cabinet," Rocha said. "I can tell you I was very, very meticulous about those cases. But they did convey some cases to me in paper bags."

Rocha said during the last week of the Mirkarimi administration, additional cases might have been brought to his office by Internal Affairs, but he went over the investigation case log before his departure to make sure no cases were left hanging.

Mirkarimi said it is "highly doubtful this happened as was suggested. [Rocha's] small office was military clean."

The former sheriff also questioned how a paper bag went unnoticed in "a small, clean office" that has been used for five months.

"Very dubious," Mirkarimi added.

Mirkarimi's use-of-force policy, as well as his changes to legal services for inmates, are just the latest in policy reversals under Hennessy, whose first major act in office was to rescind Mirkarimi's controversial policy on communicating with immigration officials.

The use-of-force policy much touted by Mirkarimi was signed the day he left office, Hirst said. But it had never been implemented and no one had been prepared or trained to follow it.

The policy would have included de-escalation training and stated what force was allowed and who is responsible for reporting allegations of inmate abuse. The policy also would have identified

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San Francisco



deputies who are disproportionately involved in such incidents and applied remedies.

"It was never implemented," Hirst said. "The new sheriff is rewriting the use-of-force policy on her own."

In the meantime, the department is using the previous policy before Mirkarimi created his own.

Prisoner legal services, which Mirkarimi said had been expanded in order to devote additional resources to prisoners, has also been returned to its status before his administration.

"The current sheriff has left things as they were before Mirkarimi," said Hirst about the service.

Hennessy said she has spent much of the last six months dealing with similar issues, but chalked much of that up to a difference in leadership.

"Whenever you follow somebody, you have a different perspective on the ways things should be done," she said.



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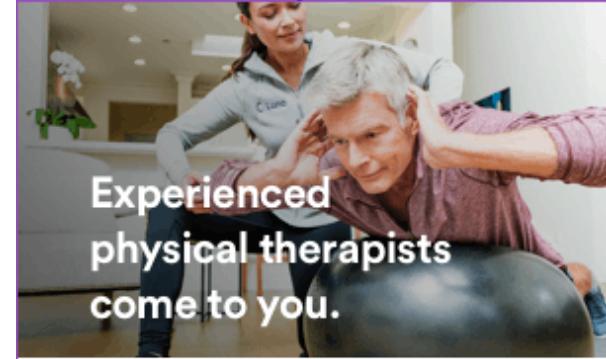
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It would be great if voters would learn of the dangers of voting someone into office based on "Name ID" after Ross's reign of error, but that of course will never happen, here or anywhere.

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